

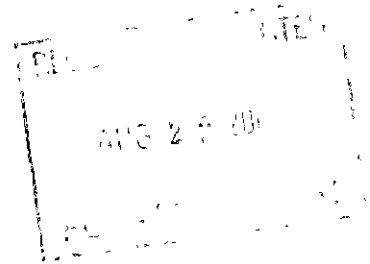
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AUG-22-2003 12:27 PM MT CARROLL LIBRARY

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Mt. Carroll Township Public Library  
208 North Main Street  
Mt. Carroll, IL 61053  
Phone (815) 244-1751  
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Federal Communications Commission

CC Docket No. 02-6

Waiver Request

Concerning USAC Letter of Rejection: Fund Year 2003 Form 471 Certification  
Rejection Letter dated 27 June, 2003

Reason for Rejection: The Signature in Block 6, Item 34, of the FCC Form 471  
submitted was blank.

Applicant's Name: Joan Hough Mount Carroll Twp. Public Library

Entity Number 135872

Form 471 Application Number 358693

Funding Request Number: 968557, 969607

Decision on Appeal: Denied in full

Explanation: On February 20, 2003, you sent an appeal along with a corrected Block 6 certification page. In your letter, you acknowledge that the original was sent without a signature and request the correction be accepted. As referenced in the South Barber decision, the purpose of a filing window is to put all applicants who file within the window on equal footing. Allowing applicants to correct their applications and resubmit them after the window has closed would eliminate any incentive to comply with SLD's document demands in a timely fashion, and could jeopardize SLD's ability to accurately apply the rules of priority in years where requests for funding exceed the annual funding cap. Therefore, your appeal is denied in full and your application will not be considered for funding.

The following pages are submitted for review.

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21 August, 2003

To Whom It May Concern:

I am well aware that the FCC seldom, if ever, reverses a decision made by USAC. However, please bear with me as I present some information which may have some bearing in your consideration of my appeal.

. Mt. Carroll is a town of less than 2,000 people. Approximately a fourth of the population is made up of senior citizens. There is much unemployment. Many of our library patrons do not have a college degree. Not many people in this town own a personal computer. The closest Barnes & Noble is at least 60 miles distant. This small library has three computers that are in constant use during the 25 hours we are open each week. Our patrons are deeply grateful for this library and the services it provides. .

In such a small town, it is almost impossible to find a fully qualified library director. I was one of six applicants for the director's position. I was hired because I was the best qualified individual for the position. Am I a qualified librarian? No. I am a 71 year-old retired teacher with two degrees and three year's experience as an adult reference library assistant in a suburb of Dallas, Texas. The salary, at best, could only be termed as supplemental even for this rural area.

I took the director's position in October, 2002, and spent a few weeks with the previous director before she departed for another state. Then I was on my own. I soon discovered that I was a one-man band! My job covered everything from keeping the accounts to monitoring furnace repairs; from planning programs to designing flyers to cleaning the toilet when the custodian was ill.

It came time to file Form 470. Since I was new and inexperienced at the director's job, Marilyn Jenssen at the Northern Illinois Library System told me to bring certain information to her office in Rockford, Illinois, and she would help me file Form 470. The trip to the NILES office in Rockford is 132 miles round trip. When it came time to file Form 471, Marilyn set up a time for me to return to Rockford to receive help in filing that form as well.

It was at this time I began having mechanical problems with my car. The local mechanic had to order parts for my car. The filing deadline for Form 471 was approaching. January weather can be quite unpredictable in

northern Illinois. I frantically phoned Marilyn, who suggested that she "walk me" through the online filing of Form 471. Since car problems, weather, and time were an issue, Marilyn's offer seemed to be the only sensible and viable alternative in this situation.

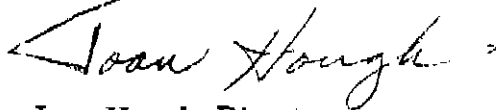
Our phone conference to complete Form 471 took 1 hour and twenty minutes to complete. I must admit, I was very tense throughout the process and found the phone procedure quite tedious. In my relief and exuberance that the form was now complete, I mailed it off without checking to see that I had signed it. The form was returned for lack of signature. I then signed and returned Form 471 to USAC along with a letter of apology and the attendant extenuating circumstances. Funding was then denied.

I am not trying to excuse my lack of attention to that one detail. I do want to point out what I believe are the mitigating circumstances. I also wish to point out that when one spends over an hour completing a form on the computer, one is quite likely to omit a manual procedure that is really out of the context of the technology used in the process of completing the form.

I was not attempting to defraud anyone. I did not do anything illegal. I committed the sin of omission by not signing my name to Form 471. I do understand and appreciate the importance of the standard rules and procedures USAC must uphold. I can't tell you how deeply I regret my lack of attention to the detail of my signature on Form 471. As a result, more money will be taken from the library budget to compensate for the lack of E-Rate funds. This means that approximately 1,000 patrons in this small, rural library will read fewer new books this coming year. The money to make up the difference in lack of E-Rate funds must come from somewhere, and the book budget is the only viable resource.

I deeply appreciate your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joan Hough". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Joan Hough, Director  
Mt. Carroll Township Public Library